William Henry Morgan and Morgan Hill on Palomar Mountain

Peter Brueggeman 2026

Information and photograph sources in this biography are cited **except** for ancestry.com, familysearch.org, and findagrave.com; therefore, an uncited fact or photograph came from those sources. San Diego County property records were not researched. The Bureau of Land Management's General Land Office Records database and old newspapers were researched.

Morgan Hill on the 1903 U.S.G.S. Ramona map

Catharine Wood writes [6]:

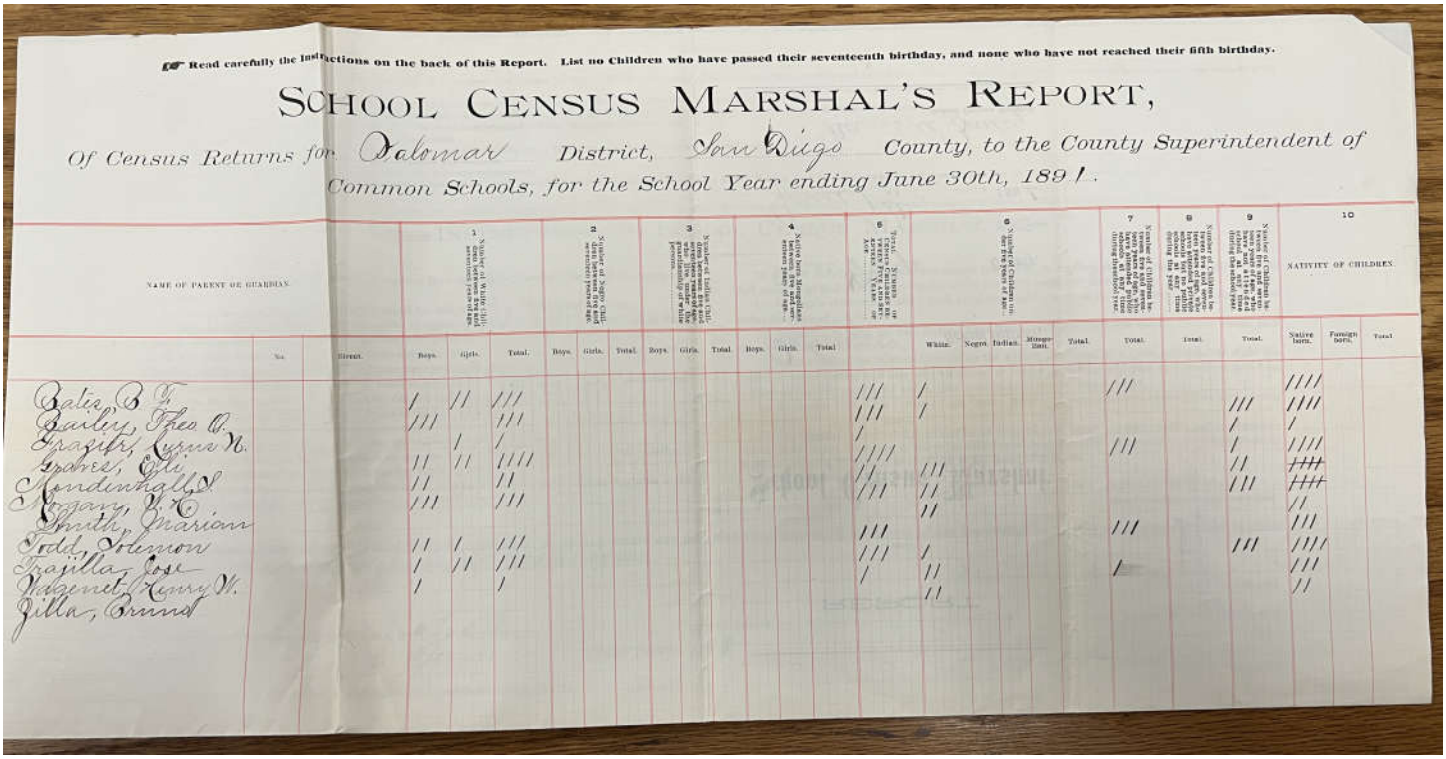
> Morgan was a former preacher who lived with his family on the west end of the mountain across the Pauma creek from Nate Harrison Grade, on a wooded hill, which has ever since been known as Morgan Hill. He was an eloquent preacher, so say those who heard him, especially when he was in the right mood and speaking on his favorite topic, "Temperance." He was also a good horse-trader.

> Many people have been "snowed in" on Palomar, but he was once "snowed out." He had gone down the mountain for supplies, and did not get back for some time on account of heavy snows. The neighbors did not know of the situation so did not look after the family as they would otherwise have done, with the result that one or two of the little ones died before Morgan's return. The family left the mountain after that. Morgan Hill is now included in the Indian grazing lands.

Robert Asher tells Morgan's 'snowed out' story differently with respect to death of his children [7]:

> A man named Morgan settled there with his family before 1901. One winter he went out to get supplies but was prevented from returning promptly by a heavy snow storm. It is said that the family came near dying of starvation before he got back. The experience was too trying to risk a repetition, and they shortly moved away from the mountain. Mr. Morgan was back a time or two, but I never had the pleasure of meeting him.

The School Census Marshal's Report, of Census Returns for Palomar District, San Diego County, to the County Superintendent for the School Year ending June 30th, 1891, lists W.H. Morgan with three boys between five and seventeen years of age, and two children under five years of age [8].

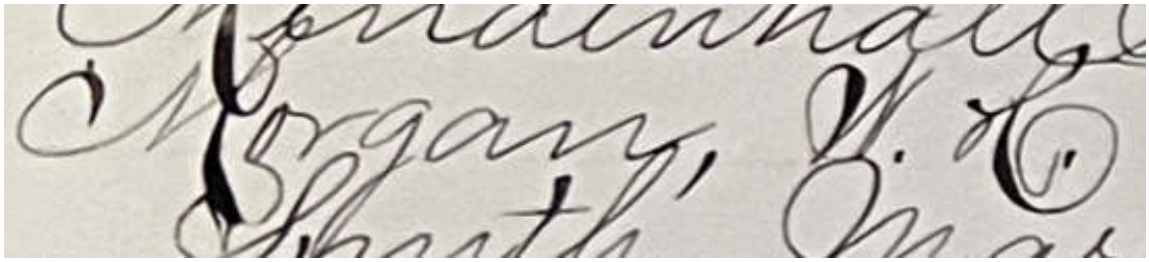


☞ Read carefully the instructions on the back of this Report. List no Children who have passed their seventeenth birthday, and none who have not reached their fifth birthday.

SCHOOL CENSUS MARSHAL'S REPORT,

Of Census Returns for Palomar *District,* San Diego *County, to the County Superintendent of Common Schools, for the School Year ending June 30th, 189 1.*

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN.	No.	Street.	1 Number of White Children between five and seventeen years of age.			2 Number of Negro Children between five and seventeen years of age.			3 Number of Indian Children between five and seventeen years of age.			4 Number of Mongolian between five and seventeen years of age.			5 Number of Children in the District between five and seventeen years of age.	6 Number of Children in the District between five years of age.					7 Number of Children between five and seventeen years of age who have been enrolled during the school year.	8 Number of Children between five and seventeen years of age who have been in regular attendance during the school year.	9 Number of Children between five and seventeen years of age who have been neither enrolled nor in attendance during the year.	10 NATIVITY OF CHILDREN.		
			Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.		White.	Negro.	Indian.	Mongo-lian.	Total.				Native born.	Foreign born.	Total
Gates, S. T.			/	//	///										///	/					///		///	////		
Bailey, Theo. C.			///		///										///	/							/	////		
Frazier, Lizzie N.				/	/										/						///		/	////		
Andres, Ella			//	//	////										////	///							//	++++		
Mondenhall, S.			//		//										//	//							///	++++		
Morgan, W. H.			///		///										///	//								//		
Smith, Marian															///						///			///		
Todd, Solomon			//	/	///										///	/							///	////		
Trujillo, Jose			/	//	///										/	//					/			///		
Valgenet, Henry W.			/		/											//								//		
Gilla, Ernest																										



W. H. Morgan's name written in the 1891 Palomar school census above

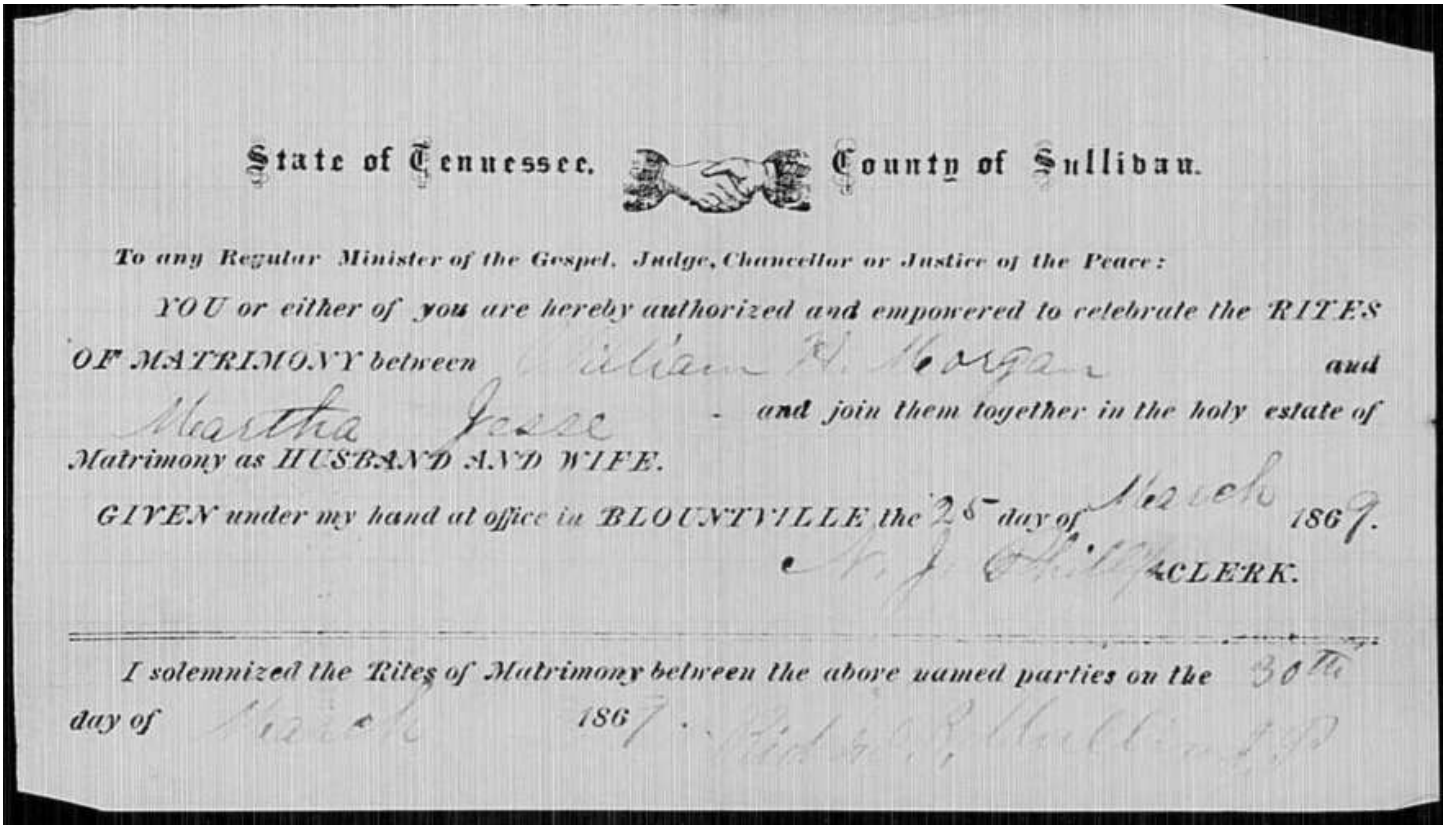
There is no earlier Palomar school census available and the next available one is 1899, and Morgan isn't listed in that or thereafter [8].

W.H. Morgan is William Henry Morgan, who was born in Virginia on August 15, 1848.

William Henry Morgan, undated

Merrill L. Brennan Waterhouse writes about her great-grandfather William Henry Morgan [4]:

> William was born to an unmarried mother, Margaret Morgan. He never knew his father and was raised by his grandparents, Robert and Mary (Hickam) Morgan in rural Scott County, VA. The family were farmers and were very poor. They also ran a moonshine still and the brew was sold to soldiers from both the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. Two of Williams brothers served in the Confederate Army, however William was too young to serve, so he often acted as a scout for troops in the area.
> At 20 years of age, on March 25, 1869, William eloped with Martha Matilda Jessee, who had just turned 16 [Martha was born in Scott County, Virginia on February 20, 1853]. With the help of several of William's friends, they left Virginia, crossing the Holston River and were married late at night by a Justice of the Peace in Blountville, Sullivan County, TN.



State of Tennessee. County of Sullivan.

To any Regular Minister of the Gospel, Judge, Chancellor or Justice of the Peace:

YOU or either of you are hereby authorized and empowered to celebrate the RITES OF MATRIMONY between William H. Morgan *and* Martha Jessee *- and join them together in the holy estate of Matrimony as HUSBAND AND WIFE.*

GIVEN under my hand at office in BLOUNTVILLE the 25th day of March *1869.*

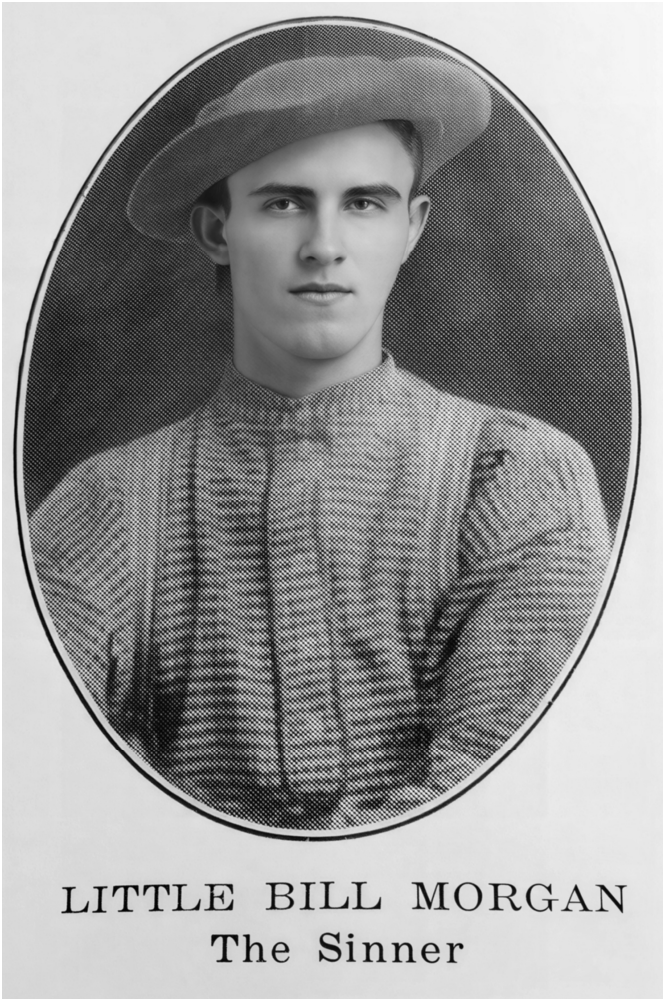
CLERK.

I solemnized the Rites of Matrimony between the above named parties on the 30th *day of* March *1869.*

> The couple decided to "go out west and grow up with the country." They traveled west with Martha's sister Sarah, and her husband John Addington. The couples' first stop was in Jackson County,

Missouri where on May 16, 1870, William and Martha's first child, Mollie Washington Morgan was born. From there, the Morgans and the Addingtons traveled to Downs, Osborne, Kansas. William and Martha lived in a tent the first summer. Multiple dry years in Kansas left settlers with crop failures. Also, in 1873 the great grasshopper plague hit the great plains states, including Kansas, where the Morgan family lived. William resorted to buffalo hunting to feed and support his family.

In his autobiography, *The Life of W. H. Morgan*, he wrote: "I was one of the parties that helped to slaughter them (buffalo) for their hides… and we continued to hunt them until they were nearly extinct." During his years in Kansas, he had periodic contact with members of the Sioux Indian tribes, who were unpredictable, as their tribal lands were being taken over by settlers. William did not learn to read or write until he was in his mid-twenties, when he was taught to read from the Bible by his wife.



William Henry Morgan portrait in *The Life of W.H. Morgan*

> Alfred Marion Morgan, was born in February 1872, in Downs, Osborne County, Kansas. He was the first son and the second of eight children born to William and Martha. The family lived in Kansas until sometime after 1889, after his older sister had married and had her first child. His parents then moved the family to California.

In the 1880 U.S. Census, William H. Morgan and his wife Martha Matilda Jessee (1853-1929) were living in Kansas with their family.

Morgan's wife Martha Matilda Jessee was the brother of William W. Jessee who lived with his family on the east side of Palomar Mountain where the Jessee postoffice was located (which they established after the Nellie postoffice had relocated to Bailey's on the west) [9]. William Jessee and family moved onto Palomar Mountain around 1893 and left in 1897 or 1898 [9]. William W. Jessee was a minister in the evangelical Holiness movement within Methodism [1,2,3].

The Morgan family were living in Kansas at the time of the 1885 Kansas census and were living in the Elsinore Township in Riverside County at the time of the 1900 U.S. Census.

The *Palomar District School Census Marshal's Report for the School Year ending June 30th, 1891,* establishes that the Morgans did live on Palomar Mountain [8]. Both writers state that the Morgans left Palomar Mountain after a hard winter, and Morgan was listed in that 1890-1891 Palomar school census. So, the earliest they could have left Palomar is summer 1891 or the following months. They definitely had left Palomar by 1895, when there are newspaper items noting his activities off Palomar (see below) [12,13].

So, did any Morgan children die on Palomar as Catharine Wood writes? Looking at William Henry Morgan ancestry.com family trees for his children, the children are inconsistently recorded. Some trees list children that other trees do not. Some children in trees have little corroborating documentation and thus may be known only within family (?). It is difficult to sort out who are these five children in the 1891 Palomar school census, and particularly which of the Morgan children may have died during their time on Palomar Mountain. While the better documented Morgan children lived beyond the family's time on Palomar, there are poorly

documented Morgan children on family trees who may have died on Palomar. The Morgans had many children.

At the twelfth annual meeting of the Southern California and Arizona Holiness Association in August 1891, William H. Morgan was given a certificate of recognition as a minister [12].

By 1895, it is evident that William H. Morgan had already left Palomar Mountain. In January 1895, the Elsinore Press published in 'Murrieta Notes' [13]:

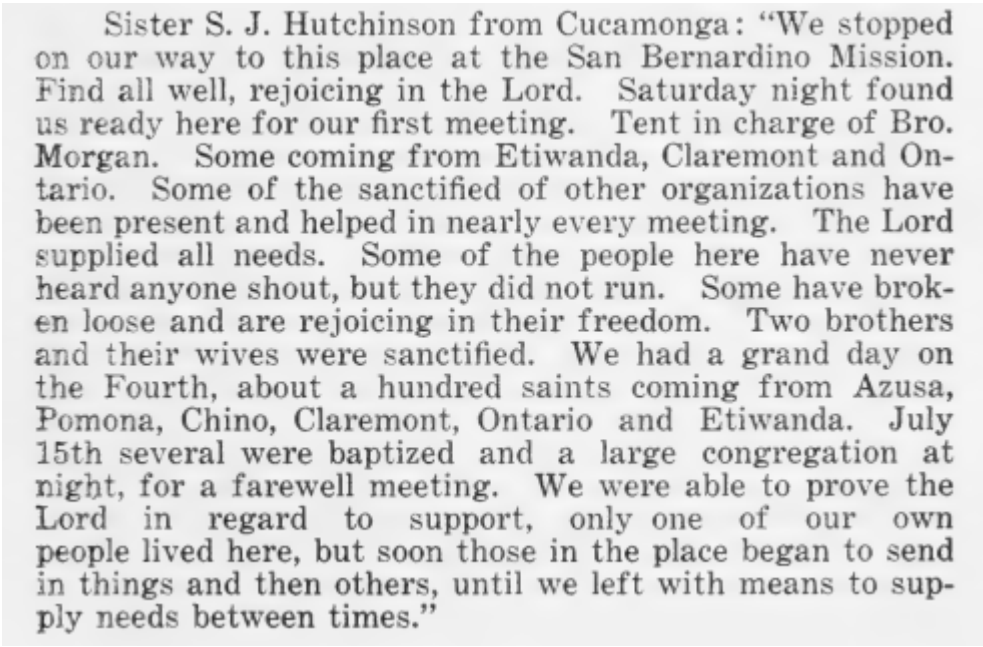
> Protracted meeting will begin at the Holiness church on Friday night, conducted by Rev. Mr. Morgan. Our Holiness people have neatly fitted up a room in town, and Sunday-school and church is held each Sunday.

At the Semi-annual Camp-meeting at Riverside in April 1895, business items included tent allocations in which it was noted "tent No. 5 to Bro. Wm. H. Morgan" [12].

On April 28, 1895, the Daily Sun (San Bernardino) published a column on 'Redlands Brevities' including [14]:

> The Holiness church will commence a series of revival meetings tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. These meetings will be held in a large tent back of the Holiness church on State street. They will be in charge of W.H. Morgan of Santa Ana.

In June 1895, it was reported that “Bro. Morgan” had a Holiness Church tent in Cucamonga [12]:



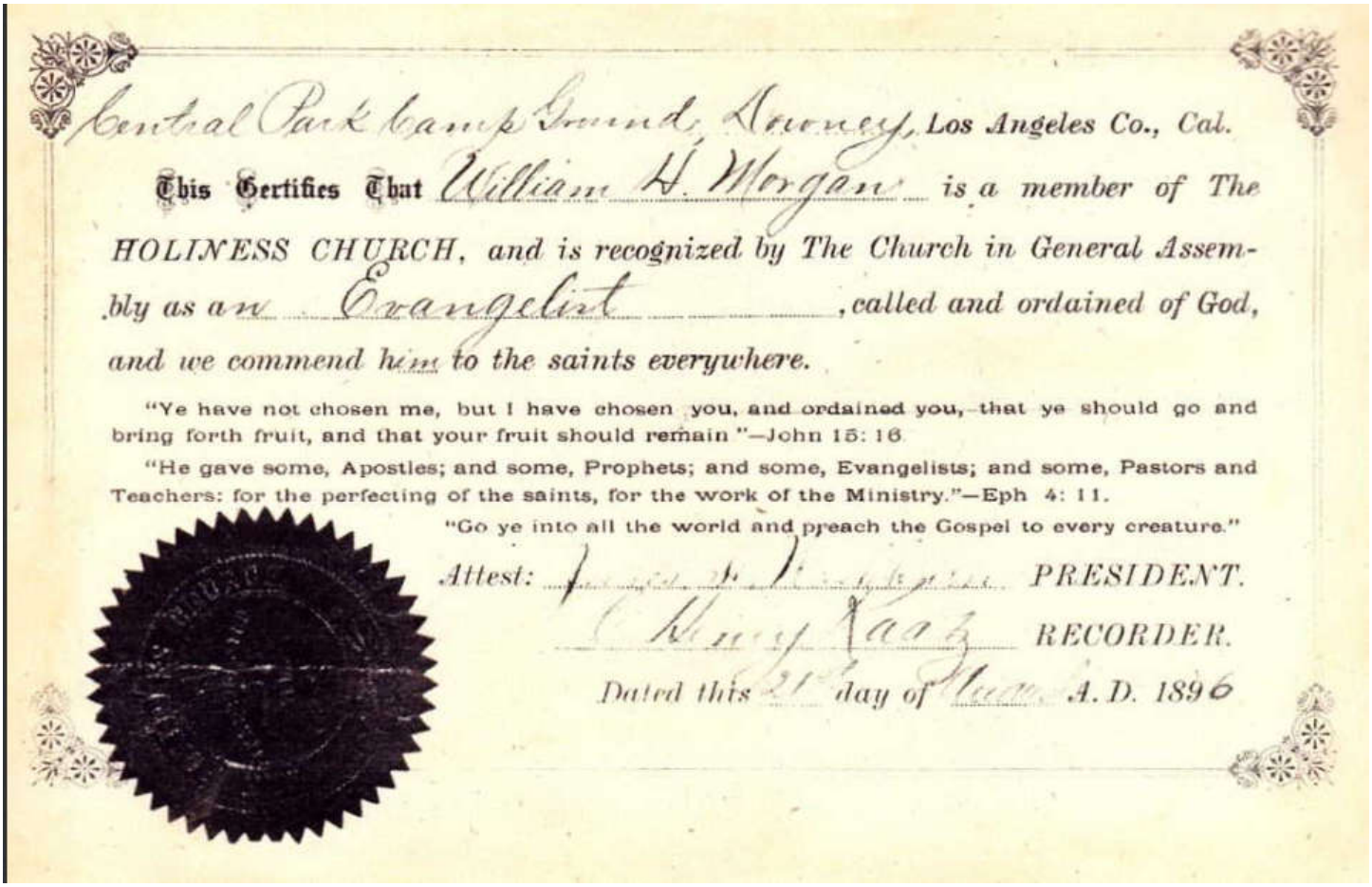
Sister S. J. Hutchinson from Cucamonga: “We stopped on our way to this place at the San Bernardino Mission. Find all well, rejoicing in the Lord. Saturday night found us ready here for our first meeting. Tent in charge of Bro. Morgan. Some coming from Etiwanda, Claremont and Ontario. Some of the sanctified of other organizations have been present and helped in nearly every meeting. The Lord supplied all needs. Some of the people here have never heard anyone shout, but they did not run. Some have broken loose and are rejoicing in their freedom. Two brothers and their wives were sanctified. We had a grand day on the Fourth, about a hundred saints coming from Azusa, Pomona, Chino, Claremont, Ontario and Etiwanda. July 15th several were baptized and a large congregation at night, for a farewell meeting. We were able to prove the Lord in regard to support, only one of our own people lived here, but soon those in the place began to send in things and then others, until we left with means to supply needs between times.”

In January 1896, Morgan preached a funeral sermon in Glendora [12].

In February 1896, the Ontario Record published in its ‘Etiwanda Notes’ that [15]:

> Rev. Mr. Morgan preached at the Holiness chapel Sunday. There were a large number of the Holiness brethren over from Cucamonga.

In August 1896, Morgan was ordained as an evangelist and selected for a two-year term on The Holiness Church's Board of Elders at the annual camp meeting in Downey, California [12].



Central Park Camp Ground, Downey, Los Angeles Co., Cal.

This Certifies That William H. Morgan is a member of The HOLINESS CHURCH, and is recognized by The Church in General Assembly as an Evangelist, called and ordained of God, and we commend him to the saints everywhere.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain"—John 15: 16

"He gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the Ministry."—Eph 4: 11.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Attest: [illegible] PRESIDENT.

[illegible] RECORDER.

Dated this 21st day of June A.D. 1896

At the Holiness Church camp-meeting in April 1899, the credentials of William H Morgan and several others were returned and cancelled, and in December 1900, the Church noted [12]:

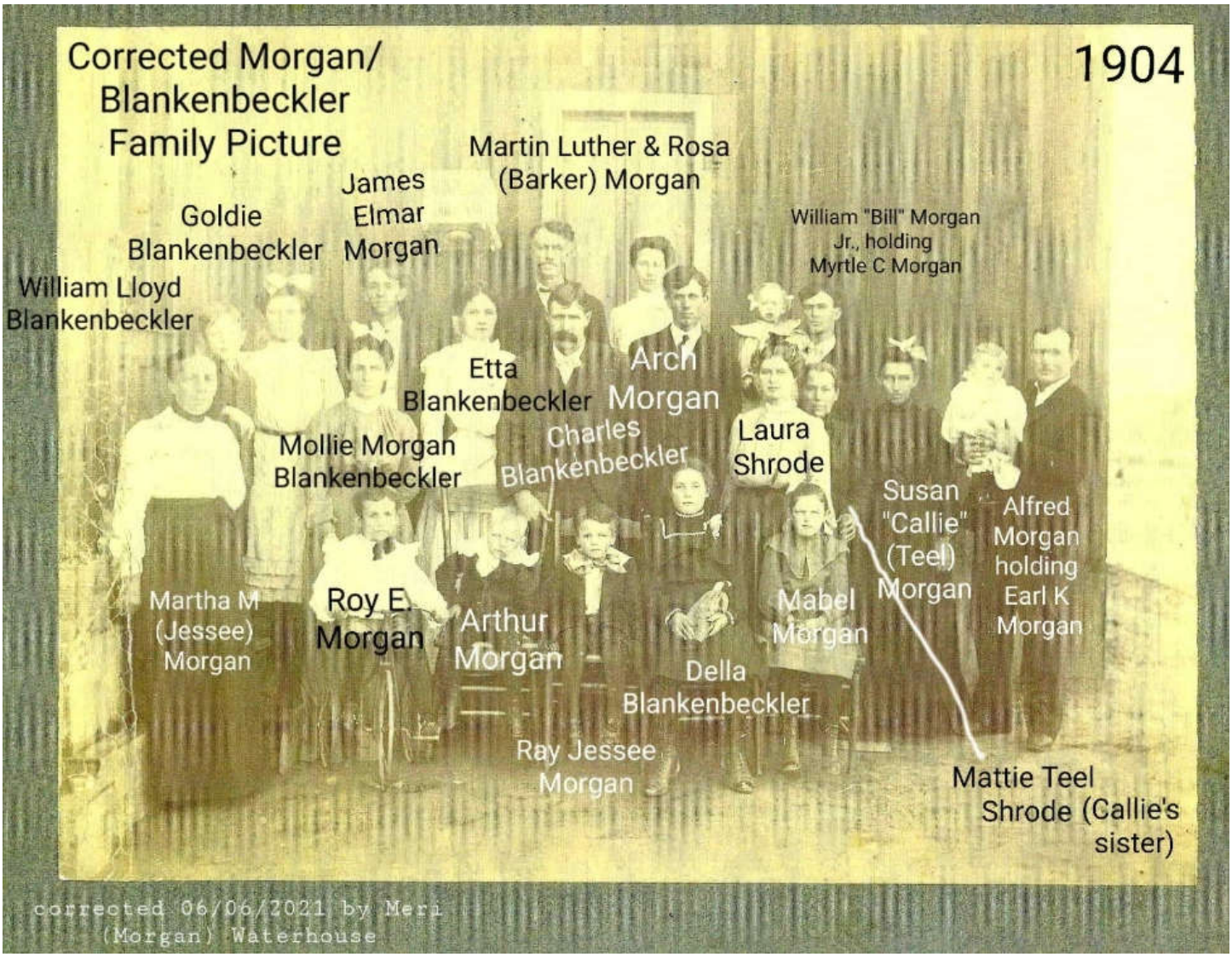
> Bro. Hoff and I (Bro. J.F. Washburn) drove over to Bro. Wm. Morgan's; he was gone. We had prayers and tried to leave cheer for her, who needs our prayers so much, Bro. Morgan not getting back to God as yet.

The Church later reported in its August 1900 annual camp meeting notes [12]:

> After prayer and praise first night, Bro. W.H. Morgan gave some of his experience. It was meet, that we should make merry and be glad, for this brother was dead and is alive; was lost and is found.

At the Spring Camp-meeting and General Assembly of the Holiness Church in April 1901, it was noted that credentials as minister and evangelist were granted to Wm. H. Morgan [12].

William Henry Morgan family photo, 1904. He’s not in the photo


Corrected Morgan/
Blankenbeckler
Family Picture
1904
Martin Luther & Rosa
(Barker) Morgan
James
Elmar
Morgan
Goldie
Blankenbeckler
William Lloyd
Blankenbeckler
William "Bill" Morgan
Jr., holding
Myrtle C Morgan
Etta
Blankenbeckler
Arch
Morgan
Charles
Blankenbeckler
Laura
Shrode
Mollie Morgan
Blankenbeckler
Susan
"Callie"
(Teel)
Morgan
Alfred
Morgan
holding
Earl K
Morgan
Martha M
(Jessee)
Morgan
Roy E.
Morgan
Arthur
Morgan
Mabel
Morgan
Della
Blankenbeckler
Ray Jessee
Morgan
Mattie Teel
Shrode (Callie's
sister)
corrected 06/06/2021 by Meri
(Morgan) Waterhouse

William Henry Morgan, undated

In local news for Wildomar, the Lake Elsinore Valley Press published in March 1922 [11]:

> W.H. Morgan, who is at present staying with his son, Archie Morgan and family, has traded property in Arizona for the Johnson place. Mr. Morgan has been actively engaged in the cattle business most all his life, but has sold out recently and now hopes to settle down here near his son.

Front row: William Henry Morgan and Martha Matilda Jessee Morgan
Back Row L-R: Molly Morgan Blankenbeckler, Etta May Blankenbeckler Stroud and her oldest child Malcom Brooks Stroud (born September 1909), c1911

In local news for Murrietta, the Riverside Daily Press reported in May 1922 [5]:

> Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox, Mr. Morgan and others are holding tent meetings at the Holiness church every evening.

William Henry Morgan died on August 31, 1926, and is buried in Downey, California [10].

LOCAL MAN IS SUDDENLY CALLED

Wm. H. Morgan, Early Pioneer and Religious Worker, Passes Peacefully to Rest.

William Henry Morgan was suddenly stricken with paralysis while in the Alpha Beta store on Main street, shortly after noon, Tuesday, and was later taken to a nearby home, where he passed away at 6:30 P. M.

Mr. Morgan was born August 15th, 1848, and had only recently passed his 78th year. He was born in Scott county, Virginia.

Mr. Morgan was an interesting and picturesque figure in Western life for many years, and was the author of a little book, entitled, "The Life of W. H. Morgan," which was circulated extensively among his friends and religious workers in the Holiness church, in which denomination, in his later years, he was an ardent worker. He organized that church in Whittier and in Murrieta, and all over this section he was known as "Evangelist" Morgan.

He was a pioneer in this valley, having first been here prior to colonization for white men.

Deceased is survived by his widow, Mrs. W. M. Morgan, and a daughter, Mrs. Mollie Blankembecklar of Santa Ana, and five sons, namely, A. J. Morgan of Elsinore, who was with him during his last hours, A. M. Morgan of Los Angeles, L. M. Morgan of Santa Ana, W. H. Morgan, Jr., and E. F. Morgan of Arizana, all of whom will be in attendance at the funeral services which will be held Sunday, at 11 A. M., in Downey, at the Holiness church, with W. L. Everett in charge. Rev. R. Winslow will conduct the simple and impressive funeral services.

Interment will be made in the little cemetery at Downey.

Although there will be no service in Elsinore, Mr. Morgan and his family have so large a circle of friends here, that the body will lie at the Everett Chapel on Washington street between the hours of 10 A. M. and 11 A. M., Saturday, where friends may go to pay their last respects to this sturdy pioneer.

The sympathy of the community is being extended to the family in their sorrow.

Lake Elsinore Valley Press, September 2, 1926 [10]

FindaGrave ID 8019618

Martha Matilda Jessee Morgan died October 5, 1929, and is buried in Westminster, California.

Findagrave ID 71467904

References

1= Palomar Mountain: Past and Present. Marion F. Beckler. Palm Desert, California: Desert Magazine, 1958. Beckler erroneously named Angus McQueen as Peter McQueen. archive.org/details/beckler_20240126
2= Kansas City Star, September 5, 1951, page 34, column 2
3= San Diego Union, August 1, 1920, page 14, column 3
4= My Grandfather's Gun. Merrill L (Morgan) Brennan Waterhouse. June 19, 2023. deadrelativesclub.com/my-great-grandfather-s-gun
5= Riverside Daily Press, May 19, 1922, page 7, column 2
6= Palomar from tepee to telescope. Catharine M. Wood. archive.org/details/wood_20230829
7= My Palomar. Robert Haley Asher. archive.org/details/asher-my-palomar_202402
8= San Diego School Records, R2.68. Folders: Cedar Grove 1899-1905; Malava 1877-1903; Palomar 1884-1909. San Diego History Center Archives.
9= Nellie McQueen, Harriet Jessee, and the early history of the post offices of Palomar Mountain. Peter Brueggeman. archive.org/details/nellie_202308
10= Elsinore Leader-Press, September 2, 1926, page 3, column 3
11= Lake Elsinore Valley Press, March 17, 1922, page 5, column 1
12= History and Reminiscences of the Holiness Church Work in Southern California and Arizona. Josephine M. Washburn. South Pasadena, California: Record Press. archive.org/details/historyreminisce00wash
13= Elsinore Press, January 18, 1895, page 4, column 2
14= The Daily Sun (San Bernardino), April 28, 1895, page 1, column 5
15= Ontario Record, February 19, 1896, page 1, column 4